

Foreword

From its rocky shores to fruitful Central Valley to snow-capped Sierra, California is rich in environmental diversity. Similarly, California's wildlife is as diverse as it is abundant.

The people of our great state have long been leaders in restoring and preserving wildlife and have fought hard to maintain clean water, clean air, and suitable habitats for all species.

I commend the Department of Fish and Game and its partners in producing *California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges*. Identifying and addressing the complex issues of resource conservation and responsible use ensures that California's vital resources will be sustained for this generation and the next.

Mike Chrisman

California Secretary for Resources

Preface

California is both the most populous and the most biologically diverse state in the nation. We enjoy more intricate landscapes, varieties of waters, and intriguing species than can be found anywhere in the country. We also experience environmental stressors and resource conservation challenges that are unparalleled. With rapid population growth and its accompanying developmental pressures, the demands on our state's natural resources are greater than ever.

The diversity of California's resources and the complexities of sustaining them emphasize the need for a collaborative approach to conservation, and the state wildlife action plan, *California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges*, is a tool for this purpose. The plan was developed in consultation with wildlife professionals, stakeholders, and the public, and specifically focuses on stressors affecting wildlife and the additional actions needed to maintain wildlife diversity and abundance in the future. It offers a straightforward discussion of the difficult issues we face in every region of California, both by describing the effects of a stressor or group of stressors on ecosystems, and considering the actions necessary to mitigate these impacts.

The Department of Fish and Game is responsible for managing the state's wildlife resources for their ecological value and enjoyment by the public. Federal, state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private landowners, and numerous other stakeholders also engage in hundreds of conservation efforts throughout the state. I am pleased and encouraged that many of the issues identified in this plan are already being considered and addressed effectively through innovative adaptive management plans and restoration projects. We will continue to encourage the involvement of and collaboration with wildlife professionals, stakeholders, and the public in developing and implementing the necessary conservation strategies recommended in the plan.

A healthy, sustained environment is necessary for all species. Just as we all have a stake in the vitality of California's resources, we all have a responsibility to ensure they are protected and conserved now and into the future. Actively managing public and private lands to mitigate the impacts of human activities on native habitats; maintain wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity; safeguard surface and groundwater quality;

impede the establishment of invasive species; and employ beneficial fire management practices requires engagement by every Californian.

Working together to implement the recommendations of *California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges*, Californians can ensure that the wildlife diversity we enjoy today will be here for our children and grandchildren to appreciate and enjoy into the future.

L. Ryan Broddrick, Director

California Department of Fish and Game